THE ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES OF THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
45 South Street
Bishops Stortford
Herts CM23 3AG
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck
New Jersey 07666
USA

Date of publication and production of master: 1975

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text or their illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is given a seven-figure serial number placed in the top right hand corner of the microfiche title strip. This is an accession number. The first figure indicates the number of the list in which the title first appears: the first three-figure group signifies the gallery or museum; the second three-figure group the accession number for that title.

Copyright, microfiche edition: Crown copyright. Reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The year of publication of the original to which this copyright refers is given on the title strip. No part of the publication reproduced on this microfiche may be reproduced in any form without permission from Her Majesty's Stationery Office and Chadwyck-Healey Ltd.

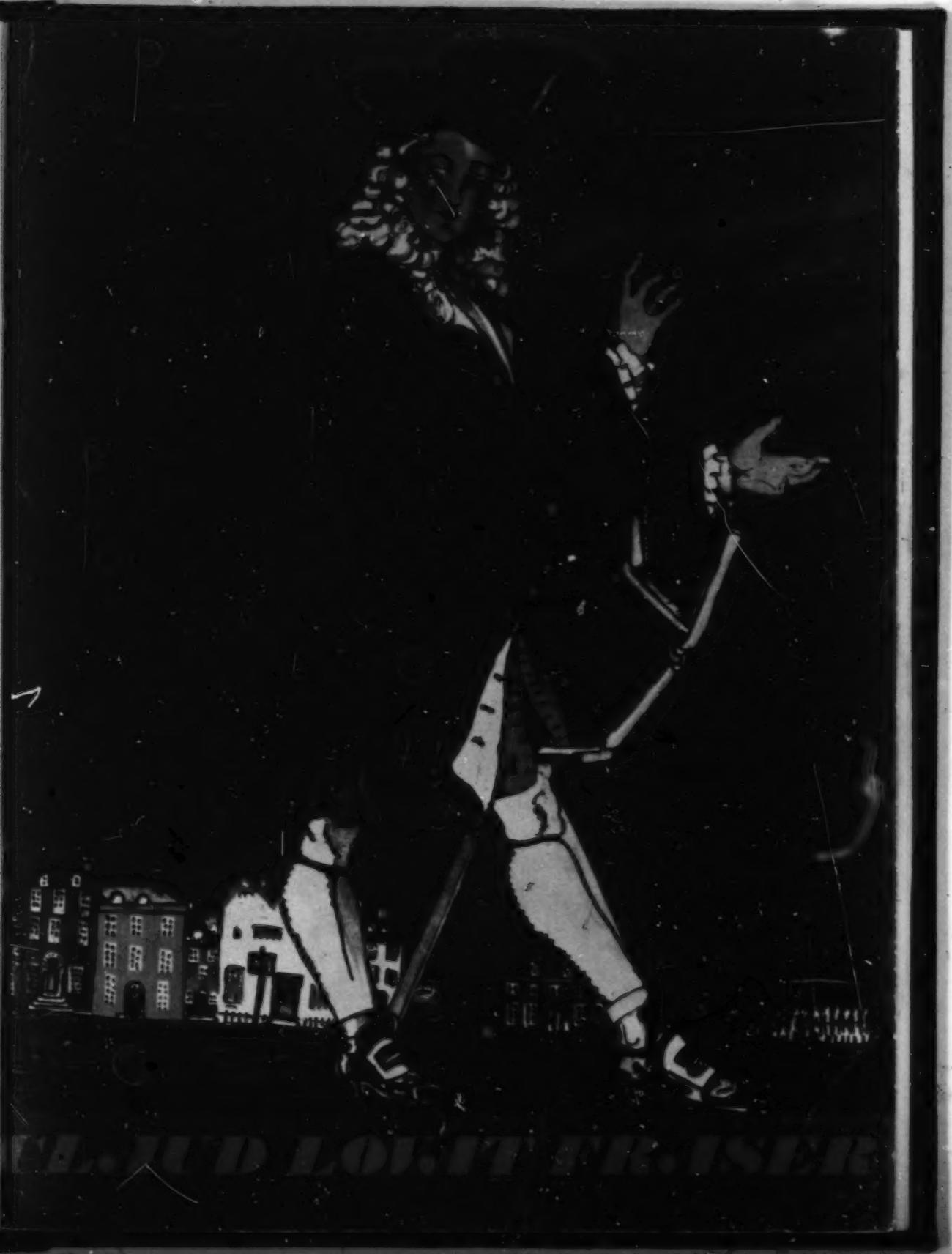
Location of original: The National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Technical data:

Producing laboratory: Micromedia Ltd, Kidlington, Oxford.

Note:

These catalogues are being filmed from bound volumes in the Victoria and Albert Museum Library. We regret that in some cases text and illustrations are lost through tight binding.


CHRIST LOVETH PRAISE

Victoria and Albert Museum

CLAUD LOVAT FRASER

London, 1969

by Grace Lovat Fraser

This picture-book has been issued on the occasion
of the Exhibition *Claud Lovat Fraser*,
held at the Victoria and Albert Museum
11 September—28 December 1969

Foreword

During the years immediately after the 1914 War few theatrical successes in Europe compared with the success of *The Beggar's Opera* as produced by Sir Nigel Playfair at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, with its sets and costumes designed by Claud Lovat Fraser. The ironies of this revived and revised eighteenth-century ballad opera, in which the Author-Beggar adjusted the last act on the stage so that his audience should have a happy ending, suited a mood of the time; while the *bel canto* rendering of the songs and the suave treatment of a rough theme were matched by the masterly abbreviations of Lovat Fraser's style. He was recognised at once as being related in the graphic arts to such predecessors as Joseph Crawhall, Beardsley, Beerbohm and the Beggarstaff Brothers (James Pryde and Sir William Nicholson), and visually the production of the opera exemplified certain principles of Gordon Craig's stagecraft as well as, if not better than, anything by Craig that had been seen in this country.

Sadly enough Lovat Fraser belonged to another order of artists—those who die young; and the larger public which got to know of him through *The Beggar's Opera* were no sooner aware of his brilliance than they became aware of his death. In the monograph which follows Mrs Grace Lovat Fraser is able to give an authoritative account of her husband's art as it developed in various fields. His influence spread rapidly in directions other than the stage, conspicuously in illustration, book-production and textile design, and it is recorded here how his personal tastes—his love of toys for example—could be both sources of imagery and of technical inspiration.

The Lovat Fraser Exhibition in the Galleries of the Department of Prints and Drawings held during the last quarter of 1969 will have been the third and largest exhibition to be devoted to this artist. Two previous ones were organised in 1968, one in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, and one in the Middleton Hall, University of Hull. Like the others, the London one has been made possible by generous loans from Mrs Grace Lovat Fraser's own collection of her husband's work, and by her most valuable help and advice.

Brian Reade, Deputy Keeper, Department of Prints and Drawings

Introduction

Claud Lovat Fraser was born in London on May 15th, 1890 and died in London on June 18th, 1921. Nearly five of these years were spent in the army during the first World War. His father was of Scottish descent and his mother of mixed Somerset and Welsh parentage. The Frasers had been settled south of the border for several generations but still cherished an unproven legend of descent from that Simon, Lord Lovat, executed on Tower Hill for his part in the Jacobite rising of 1745. Eldest sons were always called Lovat. Claud Lovat Fraser was christened Lovat Claud, the last of these names being his father's. Finding this an awkward sequence he signed his earliest work C. Fraser or, more often, Lovat Fraser; he soon changed to the signature C. Lovat Fraser which he used for the rest of his life. By his family and friends he was always called Lovat. He was educated in preparatory schools and at Charterhouse, which he entered at the beginning of the summer term of 1904 and left at the end of the summer term of 1907.

From his earliest years playing with pencils and paints had been his favourite occupation and he continued this habit at school in every moment that could be snatched from lessons or the—to him—hateful compulsory games. Most of these childish scribbles have been destroyed, but it is interesting to see, in the few that remain, how soon his pre-occupation with military and period dress appears, and that his colours are always clear and bright. His dislike of what he called "mud" is already apparent. The theatre early attracted him, first through puppet-shows and Christmas pantomimes, and later by holiday visits to London productions. In a letter to his mother, written from school in 1903, he says that he is writing three plays, and in another letter asks for a toy theatre in which to work out their settings.

While at Charterhouse his drawings matured and his personal style began to emerge; he began his lifelong habit of decorating letters and envelopes with thumb-nail sketches and intricately interlacing decorations. He became an ardent admirer of Max Beerbohm, who had preceded him at Charterhouse, and during his holidays searched London for reproductions of his work. He also tried his own hand at caricature. (The first printed reproductions of Lovat's work were caricatures of prominent people of the day, which were

published by *T.P's. Weekly* and *The Onlooker* during 1911 and 1912.) His interest in caricature did not last very long and he kept very little of what he had done in this line except for a few pen and ink, and water-colour, impressions of well-known actors. In fact, at the beginning of his career he regretted his caricatures having been reproduced, for this led to offers of commissions for further work of this kind which he was not anxious to accept, as they took time from other work in which he was more interested. He made very few caricatures after 1912, except as a light-hearted joke for a friend or for me.

After leaving Charterhouse he spent a year reading law with a private coach at Letchworth. This somewhat surprising study for a boy of his tastes was due to his father being the founder and head of a firm of solicitors in the City of London. He had always taken it for granted that Lovat, as his eldest son, would enter his firm and ultimately become its head. Lovat was not attracted to the law, but he had not yet thought of making art his career: the bond between him and his father was a close one and it seemed natural to follow the path chosen for him. During the year at Letchworth he crammed law for seven hours a day and, though irked by disciplinary restrictions, still contrived to draw in his spare time. He spent week-ends at home as often as possible, and during these went to his first dances and a great deal to the theatre. At the end of the year at Letchworth he entered his father's firm as a five-year articled clerk. The office hours were not as long as those at Letchworth: he was living at home instead of under his crammer's strict discipline, and London was at his door to be enjoyed every day instead of only at week-ends. He did not, as yet, find the law irksome, especially as his mother had fitted up a small room in the family house as a studio for him. He explored London with a notebook, and coloured crayons in his pocket, and the days spent in the Law Courts resulted in a fine crop of character sketches instead of the notes on law procedure which should have been in their place. Towards the end of his second year in the office he began to grow restive and became quite certain that his one desire and ambition was to be a painter. This conviction had been growing in his mind for some time and was finally crystallized by his visits to Dan Rider's little print and book-shop which was always filled with aspiring young writers and painters, with a sprinkling of a few older professionals, who treated the shop as a sort of informal club. His unrest was further increased by the sale of two pictures—his very first sale. But, knowing what a blow to his father his abandonment of the law would be, he hesitated for a few

months before speaking to him. In the end it was his father who broached the subject and offered to release him from his articles so that he could follow his chosen career.

On his release from the Law he enrolled in the Westminster School of Art where he came under the influence of Sickert who was teaching there at this time, and for whom he always had the deepest admiration. He left the Westminster at the end of a year: the emphasis there was on painting in oils, and for this he felt no aptitude; he was already certain that water-colours, coloured inks and the reed and mapping pens, were the tools with which he must express himself. He had recently come to know and love the work of Joseph Crawhall, had begun his collection of old street broadsides and chapbooks, and the theatre was calling to him more and more. He took a small studio in the Redcliffe Road and settled down to a year's intense and solitary work, the results of which he largely destroyed; there is very little work of this period extant. He was always very self-critical and destroyed anything which did not satisfy him; a giant waste-paper basket was always a conspicuous part of his studio's furnishings. In this first studio he drew constantly from life, experimented with colour, and perfected the use of his favourite tool—the reed pen. He was also making some exciting friendships which were to be very important in his life. Chief among these new friends was Edward Gordon Craig who encouraged Lovat's theatrical ambitions and whose warm belief in his work—expressed in a constant flow of letters—was, in all his life, to be his most cherished and stimulating source of encouragement. He also made lasting friendships at this time with Ralph Hodgson, Walter de la Mare, James Stephens, Harold Munro, Holbrook Jackson and Desmond Coke. Among painters his closest friends were Albert Rutherston and Paul Nash, whom he met later than the others mentioned. With both of them he maintained a close and affectionate relationship.

Books were an essential part of his life and he was a voracious reader, and he also very much liked being read aloud to when he was working. His tastes were catholic, but he had a special passion for the poetry of Blake and Donne; a great liking for, and knowledge of, the Jacobean and eighteenth-century playwrights; and he delighted in Pepys. He himself wrote a sure and lucid prose and some verse under his own name, or his pseudonym of Richard Honeywood.

Towards the end of 1912 he moved into a new studio, a large ground floor one at 45 Roland Gardens; this was to be his headquarters until the summer of 1918. His first studio had served its

purpose and he now needed more room, not only for painting but also in which to show his work. Also, he was planning a project—Flying Fame—for which the studio would make a good headquarters. In February, 1913, he held his first one-man show in the new studio; two thirds of the exhibits were sold, and he had a good press. Besides drawings and stage designs, he had prepared for the show a number of larger paintings of imaginary scenes or plays. For these he used water-colour heightened by body-colours and charcoal. All of these, with the exception of one called "The Slave Market", were sold. ("The Slave Market" is shown in the present exhibition.) This represents the arrival at a Moslem port of a shipwrecked Papal Legate and his suite, who are seen as they pass a street slave market. He also showed a number of painted wooden toys which were made for him by a rehabilitation centre for disabled men. These ranged from a pompous Henry VIII on horseback, to farmhouses, eighteenth-century beaux, and early nineteenth-century soldiers. Very few of these toys are still in existence for, being made of plywood, they were very frail. But designs for similar toys still survive. He also later filled a large notebook with new designs for traditional toys, brightly coloured and sometimes accompanied by diagrams showing their construction. These diagrams are typical of his approach to designing objects to be made; he always knew quite clearly how a job should be done and gave lucid verbal instructions, as well as making scaled working drawings. He was always fascinated by toys and had already begun the collecting of them, which was to be our mutual hobby after our marriage.

When his one-man show closed, Lovat concentrated on the preparation of the venture to which he had given the name of "At the Sign of Flying Fame". This was an issue of modern versions of the old street ballad-sheets and chapbooks with Ralph Hodgson and Holbrook Jackson as his partners. All three contributed five pounds each and with this tiny capital a very successful venture was launched. A preliminary leaflet, announcing titles and prices and stating that copies could be had from the secretary at Roland Gardens, was issued. The prices were sixpence each for the chapbooks, and twopence plain, or fourpence coloured, for the rhyme sheets. (There were later *de luxe* limited editions of a slightly larger size for all these, but they were not mentioned in the leaflet.) There was no secretary, and Lovat and Hodgson shared the secretarial work. Printing, block-making and binding were looked after by A. T. Stephens the printer. Distribution was from Roland Gardens. Lovat coloured the rhyme sheets by hand, though, in moments of stress, Hodgson

sometimes lent a hand or volunteer friends were called in. The latter worked from colour charts made by Lovat on which only pure, and no mixed, colours were shown. Sometimes several rhyme-sheets of the same poem will be found with colourings which differ from each other. This occurred when Lovat was doing the colouring and became bored with repeating the same colour scheme. The colours were applied in bright inks over the printed black parts of the design. Apart from the beauty of the chapbooks and rhyme sheets they are also of literary importance: Ralph Hodgson's poems "Eve", "The Bull", "The Song of Honour", and "The Mystery" were all first published in the Flying Fame chapbooks and a number of his poems were also used for the rhyme sheets. James Stephens' "Five New Poems" also first appeared in a Flying Fame chapbook, and other poems by him were used for the rhyme sheets. Lovat's "The Two Wizards" was published as a small-sized chapbook under his *nom de plume* of Richard Honeywood and several of the verses on the rhyme-sheets were also by him.

Lovat's designs for Flying Fame are all imbued with that poetic sense, and love of the fantastic and dramatic, which were always his most dominant inspiration. The designs have great freshness of invention, mastery of the reed pen and of bold, black masses. And, above all, they show that special talent for visualising type and design as parts of an inseparable whole which was always one of his greatest strengths.

The publication of Flying Fame continued for over a year, reprints being made as necessary. In 1915 Harold Munro took over the printing, publication and distribution of the Flying Fame rhyme sheets from his Poetry Bookshop and continued this for some time. From 1917 onwards he produced a new series of rhyme sheets, many of which were decorated by Lovat, who also designed many of the covers for the Poetry Bookshop's monthly *The Chapbook*. The size of the Poetry Bookshop's own rhyme-sheets, as well as their Flying Fame reprints, are somewhat larger than the Flying Fame originals, and the colouring in these later reprints is printed and not applied by hand. In 1916 the Poetry Bookshop also published the book of nursery rhymes called *Nurse Goodchild's Legacy*, the contents of which had been chosen by Lovat, who also designed the page decorations and the cover.

In 1913 he met the actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree and made for him a series of black and white chapter headings and page decorations for Tree's book called *Thoughts and After-Thoughts*; these were used for the hardback, *de luxe* and paperback editions.

The little bushy tree which was designed as a cover symbol can still be seen today on the plaque which marks a house in Sloane Street as having been inhabited by Tree. Beerbohm Tree made Lovat free of the back-stage area of His Majesty's Theatre as well as of the large room at the top called The Dome, where he gave suppers to the theatrical and literary worlds. At this time Lovat was designing settings and costumes for a play by Haldane McFall called *The Three Students*, which Tree was considering for production. Nothing came of this scheme, but Lovat's friendship with Tree was of great use to him; being allowed to haunt the back-stage area during actual performances gave him a good working knowledge of the day's most advanced methods of building and setting scenery, and of stage lighting. Both costumes and scenery at His Majesty's were oppressively opulent and realistic, but it was not in their design that Lovat was interested but in the mechanics which made them viable. The practical knowledge which he gained in this way was to be of great use to him in his future stage work.

The spring and summer of 1913 were very busy. Flying Fame took up a great deal of time, he had a number of commissions for periodical covers and he was also doing a great deal of experimental theatrical design. Very few of the latter still exist for, with a few exceptions, they were technical studies only, and were destroyed when their usefulness was over. At the beginning of this year his parents bought a little house in Buntingford, Hertfordshire, which, from now on, became his holiday home. He delighted in the rich, rolling country in which the little town was set, and in its single, long narrow street of sixteenth-century half-timbered houses and snug eighteenth-century red brick ones, as well as in some of the odd characters among its inhabitants. From now on, his notebooks are filled with quick sketches of the local scene and to the end of his life its old cottages and barns were to be recurring themes in his work.

Towards the end of this year he went down with a very bad attack of rheumatic fever; complications set in, and it was several months before he recovered. But he was still far from well and his heart had been permanently affected. He spent his convalescence at Buntingford and then, in March 1914, went for a short holiday with his father to Italy. France he already knew from sketching holidays, but this was his first sight of Italy. His notebooks became filled with glowing colours as he made innumerable sketches of Rome, Florence and Venice. As always, these notes are also sympathetic comments on the people and scenes which they record, but it is the suddenly released and richer palette which he was now using which is most

notable. He also made some single water-colours during this trip, especially of Venice, in which he caught to perfection its subtly diffused light. Altogether, apart from his theatrical designs, these notebooks contain some of the richest and boldest work he produced. During this holiday he also spent much time with Gordon Craig, who was then living in Florence.

He was back in England in the early summer of 1914 and stayed in Buntingford until October of that year, when he went to London to volunteer for the army. His heart was permanently weakened as a result of the rheumatic fever, but he was accepted by the Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps, and from this was soon commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the 14th Durham Light Infantry. He spent the rest of the year, and until the late spring of 1915, in training at Halton Camp, where the gruelling route marches which were part of the training further weakened his heart. His letters home were illustrated with impressions of the varied types of his fellow recruits, and of odd situations, a habit which he continued later from Flanders.

He arrived at the Front in the summer of 1915 and served with distinction at the Battle of Loos: he was made acting captain and commended for his capture of German prisoners in the Ypres Salient, in January, 1916. In a letter to his father written after the battle of Loos, he says that he had had the luck to be given the job of drawing all the secret maps of the position which he and his detachment were sent to take during the battle. To his father he also describes one of the first gas attacks: "I found the gas cloud was already on us. It looked like a fine Scotch mist and was absolutely stifling. I forgot to put my own helmet on and before I had gone two steps I was leaning up against the side of the trench gasping like a fish. I fought my way back and put on my respirator, gave the order for rapid fire and the men leapt over the top of the parapet (some sat on it) and blazed away for all they were worth. It remains to our Battalion to be the first in the British Army to have withstood a gas attack." In February, 1916, he was sent to hospital at Boulogne suffering from shell-shock and gas, and from there was transferred to a military hospital in England, where he remained for some time, his heart being badly affected. After leaving hospital he was given a few months of sick leave, punctuated by recurring Medical Boards.

During this sick leave he made the set of sixty-five pen and ink and water colour drawings illustrating the uniforms of the Grenadier Guards, from the inception of the Regiment to its arrival at the Battle of Loos. He completed the set in the late summer. The leisure

of his leave gave him time for the necessary research and for making these fine and carefully finished drawings. The set, which begins with a richly coloured and beautifully lettered frontispiece, represents some of his finest and most finished work; each drawing is absolutely correct in its detail, but is also beautifully composed and imbued with the feeling of the various periods shown, on which they often make a witty visual comment, such as the white-gloved subaltern in the drawing titled "Subaltern—Guard Order 1890": or they combine accuracy of detail with richly romantic colour, as in the drawing called "H.M. The Queen 1850", in which Queen Victoria, mounted on a black horse and wearing a regimental tunic, reviews the Grenadiers in Hyde Park with the Duke of Wellington at her side.

I met Lovat for the first time in September 1916, and we were engaged by the end of the month. We were married in February, 1917, and for the first year and a half of our marriage lived with his people, while keeping the Roland Gardens studio for work and for seeing our friends. Successive Medical Boards, both before and after our marriage, pronounced him unfit for service overseas, but able for home duty. This, in spite of the fact that his heart was giving him constant trouble and that he had recurrent attacks of painful rheumatism. In the late autumn of 1916 he was seconded to the War Office where he worked on visual propaganda. From the War Office, early in the following year, he was transferred to an Army Record Office at Hounslow where he remained until he was demobilised at the beginning of March, 1919. During this time he attended numerous Medical Boards, but, though his health remained precarious, he was never given his release from the Army.

In spite of the long working hours of his Army job he contrived to do a great deal of work in the evenings and the week-end day-and-a-half. I improvised a kitchen in the basement of the Roland Gardens studio, and had dinner ready as soon as he arrived back in the evening. After dinner he worked until late, and we then walked back the short distance to his parent's house. We looked forward all the week to the oasis of the short week-end. We saw a lot of our friends, who were encouraged to drop in to the studio at any time except when a red-painted "Keep Out" sign was hung on the front door. This was seldom in use, for, once an idea was clear in his mind, Lovat could work serenely in the midst of chattering friends, and even take part in the talk. (It was his habit to think out and make rough sketches for work as he sat in the crowded Tube train on his way to Hounslow.) If, as sometimes happened, the talk became too noisy, he would put

down his drawing board and take up what he called his "knitting". This was a special note-book in which he drew his lovely black and white printer's ornaments and borders; and if the talk became too *heated*, he would make sly caricatures of the offenders.

From late 1916 to mid-summer 1918, in the limited time which he could call his own, he produced an astonishing amount of fine and mature work. Amongst this were complete sets of designs for costumes and dresses for Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Captain*, and for the Garrick-Coleman *The Clandestine Marriage*, the large painting called "Cythère", and "Mr. Pope Dreams" which was planned as an idea for a ballet, in which Mr. Pope was to fall asleep in a garden, only to be wakened by the advent of Queen Mab and her Fairy Court. Besides these he made many single scene, and costume, designs, the illustrations and page-decorations for my translation of Goldoni's *The Liar*, toy and textile designs, booklet dummies, posters, and cover designs for Charlotte Mew's *The Farmer's Bride* and Harold Munro's *Strange Meetings*. Besides all this, he was making preliminary sketches for the costumes in *As You Like It*, which were later to form the basis of his designs when this play was produced in 1919.

In the summer of 1918 we moved from the studio in Roland Gardens to a house in Tregunter Road. This house had two good communicating rooms on the first floor, and we turned these into inner and outer studios. Before our marriage, we had both known the actor Nigel Playfair, and he had been a frequent visitor to Roland Gardens, and had been very taken with Lovat's preliminary sketches for *As You Like It*. He told us that he was going into theatre management as soon as he could find a theatre, and proposed putting on *As You Like It* with Lovat's designs. A few weeks before Christmas, 1918, he came to see us in the new house, and told us that he had found a suitable theatre; and that, if all went well, he was going to start his new venture early in the new year: after the first play, he proposed putting on *As You Like It*. Lovat immediately began final work on the costumes and scenery for this. The theatre in question was the Lyric Opera House in Hammersmith, which had fallen on bad times during the war, and been empty for the last year. Playfair was determined to open his season before Christmas so as to cover some of the costs of renovation. As there obviously was not time to design anything for the opening play, which was to be a children's pantomime called *Make Believe* by A. A. Milne, this was put on with hired sets and clothes, but with a special poster designed by Lovat. It showed a Gavarni-like female masker, and was used, with a change of type, for all the subsequent Lyric productions except

The Beggar's Opera, for which Lovat designed a special poster of Macheath in chains.

Make Believe was followed, at the end of January, 1919, by Pergolesi's short opera *La Serva Padrona*, which was given the English title of *The Maid turned Mistress*. This is a gay and frivolous opera with delicious music. It was rather a family affair, as Lovat designed the scenery and costumes, and I both translated the book and played the leading woman's role. Lovat designed a setting and costumes in an eighteenth-century style, but with a completely unrealistic approach, and with the gayest and brightest of pure colours. He had a wide and thorough knowledge of historical dress, but believed that to pedantically copy a period's fashion was, in the theatre, a completely wrong and sterile approach. His method was to steep himself in a period, and then to design inventively within its basic conventions. His designs were true to the spirit of a period, but never copied its styles; they always had freshness and individuality of invention, and he was never afraid to take such liberties as he thought needful for the effect which he wished to make. He felt very strongly that every period has a basic shape and outline which is immediately recognisable, and that this recognition is blurred in the theatre if too much realism and detail are added to it. He tried to design as if he were living in a period, not examining it from outside, and allowed himself to invent or alter as he might find needful; but he still kept within its basic conventions. He aimed at a pictorial and theatrical restatement of a period, rather than a reproduction. To achieve this, he would ruthlessly suppress or simplify details which might detract from its basic shape and its theatrical and pictorial effect.

The Maid turned Mistress had only a short run—it opened on January 29th, 1919, and it was necessary to find an immediate successor to it, as the casting of *As You Like It* was not yet complete. A success from the Birmingham Repertory Theatre—*Abraham Lincoln*, by John Drinkwater—was imported with its complete cast. It was only meant to run for a few weeks, until *As You Like It* was ready for the stage; but, starting on February 19th, 1919, it turned into a success, and ran for a full year. Work on *As You Like It* was stopped, and the cast disbanded. Lovat, however, completed his designs: even if it was to be several months before they were needed, he could not risk them to be finished later; for it might be difficult to catch the same feeling if they were once laid aside. Also, he was to have a one-man show in Heal's Mansard Gallery in the following September, and he had planned to show a number of the *As You Like It* designs in this.

Six weeks before Easter 1919, Nigel Playfair was invited by the Governors of the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon to bring his production of *As You Like It* to open the Shakespearian Festival of that year on April 23rd, 1919. By the time all was settled, there were only five weeks left before the opening night, and though the designs were finished and the cast engaged, the time in which to mount the production was dangerously short. Money too was not very plentiful, and as an economy measure the costumes—both men and women's—were all made by me in a part of Lovat's studio, instead of by a professional costumier. We turned the inner studio into a workshop, with sewing machines and stencil tables, and somehow got everything finished in time. It was a nerve-racking job, but it had one great advantage—Lovat was constantly available for help and supervision. Though the war was over, materials in good colours were still very scarce, and many of the sharp clear colours Lovat's designs called for were quite unobtainable. So a large number of the materials we used were dyed in our bathroom. During these hectic weeks I learnt how practical was Lovat's approach to his designs; he gave exact instructions as to cut, and could, if need be, make paper patterns for an intricate hanging sleeve or pleated tunic. He cut all the master stencils himself, and dyed most of the materials. In addition to this, he spent hours supervising the construction and painting of the scenery and properties.

As You Like It raised a storm at Stratford, which, in those days, was used only for productions of the utmost dingy realism. Local taste found Lovat's gay interpretation of fifteenth-century fashions, and his decorative and completely unrealistic scenery, outrageous and denounced it loudly as "Futuristic": they were even seen as an insult to Shakespeare's "good name", according to a particularly embittered expert. It is today almost impossible to realise what a storm of venomous anger this production raised; the bigoted and furious passions aroused by it were really frightening. Everywhere—on the streets, in the pubs and tea shops—the storm raged, so that we—and the company—mostly stayed prudently in our lodgings, out of working hours. It is amusing to look back on now, but at the time it was both frightening and bewildering, especially for Lovat, who was utterly sincere about his designs, and was both surprised and hurt by the storm they had raised. One newspaper sent a representative to interview him and report on the situation. This interview was published under the heading of "Outbreak of Bolshevism at Stratford!"

The rest of the spring and summer of this year (1919) were mostly

spent in preparations for the Mansard show, and in finishing a set of fabric designs based on the *As You Like It* stencil patterns, which had been commissioned by a London textile manufacturer. The Mansard show opened in September, announced by a poster by Lovat. It included two of his larger paintings, "Mr. Pope Dreams" and "The Disreputables", some *As You Like It* and *The Maid turned Mistress* designs, single costume designs for other plays, War scenes, studies of Buntingford cottages and, for the first time, some nudes. Sales were good and there was a good press. Apart from preparing this show, Lovat had also, during the summer, completed the drawings for the large book of Nursery Rhymes commissioned by the Edinburgh firm of T. C. and E. C. Jack.

Shortly before the opening of the Mansard show, Lovat had met Harold Curwen of the Curwen Press, and they became friends—a friendship which led to a very happy working association. They understood each other perfectly, and shared many tastes in common; and both had the same fierce integrity in regard to work. To his technical knowledge, Curwen added a warm appreciation of good design. From their first meeting, Lovat worked continuously for the Curwen Press, designing printer's ornaments, Christmas cards, letter headings, advertising booklets and display cards, and many other kinds of advertising material. His work for this Press includes some of his best and gayest in this field.

For some time Playfair had been talking about producing *The Beggar's Opera* after the London run of *As You Like It* was ended. *Abraham Lincoln* was still obstinately holding the Lyric stage so that the production of *As You Like It* did not seem very imminent; but Lovat did not want to be hurried over *The Beggar's Opera* designs, which called for three stage settings and many costumes. The carpenter at the Lyric made him a scale model of that theatre's stage, and he began work on this. But one model was not enough, he needed several to work on simultaneously, and the studio became badly overcrowded. It was clear that the theatre would from now on, take up a great deal of his time and that he needed a bigger studio. We sold the Tregunter Road house and moved into a big late Victorian house in Elm Park Gardens. It had an enormous and well-lit drawing room on the first floor with a smaller one leading from it. We made the larger room into a studio, installing a theatre flood lamp in the ceiling for night work, and keeping the smaller room for stage models and for showing pictures.

As You Like It was produced at the Lyric, Hammersmith, on the 21st of April, 1920, almost exactly a year after the Stratford-on-

Avon production. It did not raise such a storm in London as it had in Stratford but, though well received, it soon became obvious that it would not have a long run, and preparations for the production of *The Beggar's Opera* were begun. Lovat's designs were all complete, and as Arnold Bennett had not yet finished his cutting and arrangement of the book, it seemed a good moment for a short holiday. We slipped over to Paris to spend a few days with Gordon Craig. On our return to London Lovat was met by an urgent crisis. Money as usual, was not plentiful, and Playfair had decided that he could not afford the three different sets for which he had asked, and for which Lovat had made all the working drawings. He was faced with re-thinking all his ideas, and producing an entirely different design for a permanent set. This meant not only working out an idea that would make an attractive and practical setting for the different scenes, but also planning all the technical details and working drawings for its construction; and for the additional accessories which would be needed to create an illusion of a change of scene. He had been overworking for some time, and was still, in spite of the few days in Paris, very tired. He was badly shaken at the prospect of beginning all over again, but said nothing of this to anyone but me. At the end of four days he had produced the famous permanent set for *The Beggar's Opera*, with all its ingenious and effective ideas for slightly altering its appearance for the various scenes; all the working drawings for this were also complete.

For the costumes he, at first, only made working drawings. All the finished drawings of these, including the illustrations for the Heinemann edition of *The Beggar's Opera*, were made after the actual production. For the costumier's workrooms, he made simple coloured line-drawings which clearly showed cut and detail, and were easy to follow. On these he wrote instructions, and attached samples of material. The design of the women's costumes was much simplified so that the colours of which they were made were not blurred, and composed well in the *ensembles*. In his own words "yards of trimming were eliminated to emphasise the period's characteristic outline". For the same reason, they all wore exactly the same hair-dressing, instead of the varieties of this which, in real life, would have been theirs. Mrs. Peachum was the only woman who wore a wig, and for this he designed an eccentric version of the fashionable line of the period, to emphasize her odd character. Peachum and Lockit wore sober and slightly old-fashioned clothes to show their pseudo-respectability; while Macheath, as a successful highwayman, was dressed in a scarlet coat and white stockings in

the height of fashion and wore an elaborate periwig. His gang of highwaymen, however, wore a medley of clothes, some fashionable and some distinctly old-fashioned, but all very dirty, tattered and torn. Lovat's method of achieving this effect was to have the costumes quite perfectly made; they were then sent to him at his studio where he proceeded to break them down, by tearing sleeves and cuffs into rags, cutting off the lower part of a breeches leg, so that it hung raggedly; ripping open seams, tearing holes, and—as a last effect—throwing dirty paint-water over them and crumpling them whilst damp, or even mopping up the floor with them. The result was most convincingly second-hand and well worn.

The Beggar's Opera was an instant and enormous success, though none of us dreamt of the three-year run it was to achieve. Gordon Craig came to stay with us to see the last rehearsals and attend the first night. His first appearance at rehearsal rather frightened the cast, but his obvious pleasure and interest in the production soon reassured them. He stayed on for several days, and went every night to see the performance.

After Craig went back to Paris, Lovat and I went to Dymchurch on the Romney Marsh to spend a holiday in a cottage we had taken there. Here we met for the first time Paul Nash and his wife, and began the friendship which was to mean so much to Lovat. From now on, the four of us were constantly together. On arrival at Dymchurch, Lovat had been very near the end of his tether from overwork, and I was desperately anxious about him. But he always relaxed best at the sea, and he fell in love with Romney Marsh at first sight. Being constantly with Paul was also a great source of refreshment to him. We spent a carefree and happy holiday with no nagging date-lines to be met; Lovat made a quantity of sketches and some finished drawings, but all at a reasonable and unhurried pace. I had long since given up trying to prevent him from working when on holiday; but painting for his own pleasure, and not to order, was a real rest for him. He simply *had* to draw or paint, and could never spend a day in contentment where he was, separated from the tools of his trade. When away from his studio he always carried in his coat pocket notebooks, crayons and pencil, and a small paint box and brush, the latter being wetted by being spat upon.

We went back to London at the beginning of August, 1920, and for a short while after our return were able to live at a leisurely pace. Lovat began his painting of "The Lonely House", for which he had made rough sketches while at Dymchurch. The subject was an abandoned and lovely red brick Georgian house set in the centre of

the Marsh, with not another building in sight. It was forlorn and mysteriously attractive, and we toyed with the idea of finding its owner and trying to buy it. But it was the kind of house about which one only day-dreams, for, in spite of its charm, it was also slightly sinister and forbidding. Lovat was very aware of these conflicting qualities, and translated them into his painting.

Besides working on this picture, he was beginning a set of thirty-six designs for characters in various plays which was to be called "Men, Women and Monsters". He was to have a one-man show at the Leicester Galleries in the autumn of 1921, and this set was to be an important part of the exhibition. Of the thirty-six paintings planned, only about twenty were completed; but these are some of the finest and richest work he produced. The plays from which the characters were taken were all old favourites of his, and had been long pondered over; he was not designing for a specific actor, or in terms of economic possibilities, but to please himself, and so could give his invention full play. At the same time he was also making finished designs for the settings, and dresses for John Drinkwater's play *Mary Stuart*, and worked alternately on these, and on the "Men, Women and Monsters" series. There was no immediate prospect of *Mary Stuart* being produced, but Lovat planned to include the designs for it in the forthcoming Leicester Galleries show. (When, after his death, the play was produced in a Hampstead theatre, lack of funds prevented Lovat's designs from being used.)

In October, 1920, he met for the first time the Russian dancer Tamara Karsavina and her husband, Henry J. Bruce. She commissioned designs for a ballet to be produced at the London Coliseum early in the New Year. This commission was to lead to one of the happiest associations of his life; he found working with Karsavina a joy, because of her quick and sympathetic understanding, enthusiasm and tireless perfectionism. Their working partnership soon grew into a strong friendship in which her husband and I were joined into a closely linked foursome. The ballet for her was called *Nursery Rhymes*, and was produced in early January, 1921. The rhymes used were "The Queen of Hearts", "The Two Blackbirds", "Little Jumping Joan" and, though strictly not a real nursery rhyme, Robert Louis Stevenson's amusing verse called "The Industrious Pirate". The choice of subjects was made by Lovat. As the ballet was part of a long vaudeville programme, in which act followed act, without pause, in front of quickly changed back-cloths and permanent wings, it was not possible to use scenery for it. Instead, Lovat designed a huge semi-circular emerald green curtain which enclosed the stage

and obliterated the permanent side-wings; slits were cut in it for entrances. There was only one piece of built scenery, which was placed in the centre-back: this was a tall arch, with flanking columns, at the top of a short flight of steps. The whole was brightly painted in the gayest of toylike colours and patterns. Down the steps, on her points, Karsavina made her first entrance as the Queen of Hearts. This piece of built-scenery was mounted on wheels, so that it could be rolled off the stage in a few moments while the curtain was flown upward to once more reveal the next turn's backcloth and wings. At the first rehearsal of "The Queen of Hearts" Lovat invented a delightfully clumsy and hiccuping step for the King of Hearts' first entrance, which Karsavina immediately incorporated into the ballet.

Once the ballet was launched, Lovat returned to preparing work for the Leicester Galleries' show, but was soon interrupted by a commission to design the scenery and dresses for Lord Dunsany's play *If*, which was to be produced by Nigel Playfair with Henry Ainley and Gladys Cooper in the leading parts. Lovat was very pleased by this assignment, for he very much admired Lord Dunsany's work, and Henry Ainley was an old friend. The play begins in a City clerk's suburban home in 1912, and from here moves off into typically fantastic Dunsany "Oriental" country. It gave splendid scope for settings and costumes of a purely fanciful kind, and in the first scene a chance for slyly comic social comment. There was, as usual, very little time in which to design and make the settings and costumes, but money was not in quite as short supply as usual. For both scenery and costumes Lovat made working drawings only. He designed the scenery with cardboard cut-out shapes on an exact model of the stage on which they were to be used; when satisfied with these, he made black-and-white scaled working drawings, to which he added small paintings of each scene showing the colours and positions to be used. Technically, designing the scenery was difficult and complicated, for the stage on which the play was to be produced was not very deep, and there were many changes of scene, including —besides the suburban room—a railway station and railway carriage, several indoor Oriental palace scenes, an Oriental street, and a wayside tent filled with large idols. Again, he only made working designs for the costumes, which he pasted on to large envelopes in which were slipped a colour chart, cuttings of the chosen materials to be used, and stencil designs and diagrams. He also used a large notebook in which, drawn to scale, were designs for all the weapons, drinking cups, conjuror's equipment and other properties for which the play called.

Lovat only made two finished drawings for *If*, both of them of Gladys Cooper; one shows her wearing spectacles and a long 1912 dress for her first appearance. The second shows her in the gorgeous Oriental dress which, as the Khalifa of Al Shaldomir, she appeared later in the play.

As soon as *If* was safely staged, Lovat began work on another ballet for Karsavina which was to be called simply *Divertissement*, and was to be produced at the Coliseum in July next. Again he chose a curtain for the background, this time of very deep blue, and he designed some ingenious wire frames around which the curtains could be draped to give the impression of huge columns. He made working drawings only for the costumes, with the exception of one dress for Karsavina, which was meticulously drawn, though on it were written instructions to the dressmaker. He was also, at the same time, working on the "Men, Women and Monsters" series. Used as I was to the fever pitch of work which he could keep up, I was dismayed and frightened by the tense way in which he now spent his working hours. To try to induce him to slow up, only made him nervous and unhappy; he worked late into the night, and I dared not try to shorten his hours.

At the end of May we went to Dymchurch, where we shared a cottage with Paul and Margaret Nash, and Lovat at last began to relax. The peace of the Marsh, and Paul's quietly affectionate company, eased the strain under which he had been labouring. We had a few delicious, peaceful days wandering across the Marsh and he finished and sent off to Karsavina the last dress design for her new ballet. I rejoiced that there was no more urgent work pending. But two days later he felt deadly tired and stayed in bed, something I had never known him to do before. I sent for our London doctor who called in a specialist, who ordered him to a nursing home in Folkestone the next day. The day after, he seemed a little better; but the next day he suddenly grew worse, and an immediate operation was ordered. This was technically successful, but in the night his heart began to fail, and he died in the early morning of June 18th, 1921.

There was still work of his to finalise, his setting and costumes for two special performances of Gustav Holst's opera *Sāvitri*, which were due to begin on the 21st of June, had not been passed by him. I took the dress to rehearsal to make sure that all was as he would have wished it; and Karsavina and I, between us, staged his last work—the ballet which he had designed for her. The Leicester Galleries' one-man show became a Memorial Exhibition in December 1921.

As an artist Claud Lovat Fraser was completely dedicated to his work, and incapable of deviating from the ideals he had set himself. At the same time he was touchingly humble in his assessment of it, and unashamedly pleased and happy when it was understood and appreciated. As a person he was kind, loving and unselfish, and incapable of meanness or jealousy. He had a hot—but well controlled—temper which only cruelty or meanness provoked. His sense of humour was Puckish, but he was also subject to sudden fits of melancholy. He loved people and animals, and had a genius for friendship: he made friends quickly, and kept them always. Following his death, I received a letter from the old countryman on whom he had been billeted during his war training, which has always seemed to me to describe him completely: "the most perfect and beautiful, true-hearted gentleman we have ever known".

List of Plates

List of Plates

Frontispiece Shopping.
Signed and dated on the mount Lovat Fraser. 1912.
Charcoal and water- and body-colour 10¼ × 8in.

1 Poster advertising *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, produced at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London, June 1920.
Colour lithograph 30 × 20in.

2 Florindo. A character in *The Liar* by Carlo Goldoni. One of a set of five drawings of characters in the play.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser fec: Oct: 1917.
The Liar, translated from the Italian by Grace Lovat Fraser, decorated by the artist and with a foreword by Edward Gordon Craig, was published in 1922.
Pen and ink and water- and body-colour 15½ × 9¾in.

3 Design for the costume worn by Grace Crawford as 'Serpina' in the operetta *La Serva Padrona* by G. B. Pergolesi, produced at the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, London, January 1919.
Pen and ink and water- and body-colour 15½ × 10¼in.

4 Designs for the costumes of 'Three Woodland Lords' in *As You Like It*, produced at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, April 1919.
Pen and ink, and water-colour 15 × 10in.

5 Design for the costume of 'Touchstone' in *As You Like It*, produced at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, April 1919.
Pen and ink, water-colour and silver 11½ × 10in.

6 Design for the costume of 'Amiens' in *As You Like It*, produced at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, April 1919.
Pen and ink and water-colour 15½ × 9¾in.

7 Design for the costume of 'Mrs Vixen' in *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, produced at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London, June 1920.
Pen and ink and water-colour 15¼ × 11⅞in.

8 Working drawing for the costume of 'Macheath' in *The Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay, produced at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London, June 1920.
Pen and ink and water-colour 11 × 8½in.
Victoria and Albert Museum. E.1131–1935

9 Design for the costume worn by Madame Karsavina as 'Jumping Joan' in the ballet divertissement *Nursery Rhymes*, produced at the Coliseum, London, January 1921.
Pen and ink and water- and body-colour 19½ × 11in.

10 Design for the costume worn by Madame Karsavina in 'Two Blackbirds' in the ballet divertissement *Nursery Rhymes*, produced at the Coliseum, London, January 1921.
Pen and ink and water- and body-colour 21¼ × 13in.

11 Design for the costume of 'Bothwell' in *Mary Stuart* by John Drinkwater.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser: Jany: 1921.
Pen and ink and water- and body-colour 21 × 14in.

12 Design for the costume of 'An African Fairy' in *Crossings* by Walter De La Mare.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser: 27: Feby: 1921.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 19 × 13½in.

13 Design for the costume of 'Coreb, a Spirit' in *The Merry Devill of Edmonton*. Anonymous.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser: 2: March: 1921.
Pen and ink and water- and body-colour 20¾ × 12in.

14 Design for the costume of 'Miralda Clements in 1911' in *If* by Lord Dunsany, produced at the Embassy Theatre, London, April 1921.
Pen and ink and water-colour 19½ × 11½in.

15 Design for the costume of 'Miralda Clements' in *If* by Lord Dunsany, produced at the Embassy Theatre, London, April 1921.
Pen and ink and water- and body-colour 20 × 12¼in.

16 A Room in the Doctor's House. A design for a stage setting in *The Liar* by Carlo Goldoni. c. 1917.
The Liar, translated by Grace Lovat Fraser, decorated by the artist, with a foreword by Edward Gordon Craig, was published in 1922.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 10 × 12¼in.

17 Design for a stage setting for *The School for Love*, an incomplete project for a play by Doris Keane.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser 1919.
Water- and body-colour on board 13 × 8¼in.

18 Model for the stage setting of Act II, Scene 1 in *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, produced at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London, June 1920. The model was built to the scale of ½ in. to 1 foot by Victor Hembrow for the artist's records, as his own cardboard model would be destroyed during the processes of scene-making. The model closely follows the original design and shows the model figure of 'Macheath' in the foreground.
Victoria and Albert Museum. E.422–1921.

19 The Slave Market.
Water- and body-colour 23¼ × 35½in.

20 Title-page of *The Bull*, a poem by Ralph Hodgson. Published by Flying Fame, 1913.
Printed book 6½ × 4½in.

21 *The Late, Last Rook*, a poem by Ralph Hodgson, issued as a Broadside by Flying Fame, 1913.
Printed leaflet 11⅛ × 5⅞in.

22 Designs for book illustrations. 1916–1919.

23 Designs for book illustrations. 1916–1919.

24 Title-page for *A Book of Songs of the XVIII Century.*
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser: inv: et del: Apl: 1917.
Pen and ink and water-colour 10 × 7¼in.

25 *Festival of Christmas.* A leaflet illustrating a poem by George Wither, with three Christian mummers. 1921.
Colour lithograph 8¼ × 5¼in.

26 Title-page of *Poems from the works of Charles Cotton.* The Poetry Bookshop, 1922.
Printed book 8¼ × 5¼in.

27 Henry VIII. Design for a wooden toy. 1912.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 6½ × 6¼in.

28 Designs for papier-mâché tumbler toys for *A Book of Simple Toys, Traditional and Otherwise.* 1917.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 8¾ × 6¼in.

29 Wrestlers. 1911.
Inks and water-colour 6 × 6¼in.

30 Amiens.
Signed and dated Lovat Fraser. 1913.
Charcoal and water- and body-colour 24¾ × 12¾in.
Lent by Sir Anthony Hooper, Bt.

31 Soldiers: leaf from a sketch-book. c. 1916.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour. 5¾ × 6in.

32 Otogyps Calvus.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser '19.
Indian ink and water-colour 9¼ × 7in.

33 Hannah Meredith's. A cottage at Buntingford, Hertfordshire.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser 1919.
Pen and ink and water-colour 8¾ × 5¼in.

34 Nude study: seated woman.
Signed and dated C.L.F. Nov: 1919.
Pen and ink and wash 10½ × 8¼in.
Lent by Sir Anthony Hooper, Bt.

35 Nude study: two seated women. c. 1919.
Pen and ink and wash 12¼ × 11¼in.

36 Scene at the Chelsea Art Ball.
Signed and dated C. Lovat Fraser. 1920.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 5½ × 7¼in.

37 Design for a printed textile with floral pattern. c. 1920.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 10 × 10in.

38 Design for a printed textile with circular pattern. c. 1920.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 10 × 10in.

39 Design for a textile with a small geometric pattern, to be printed on voile. c. 1920.
Water- and body-colour 10 × 10in.

40 Design for a printed textile with geometric pattern. c. 1920.
Indian ink and water- and body-colour 10 × 10in.

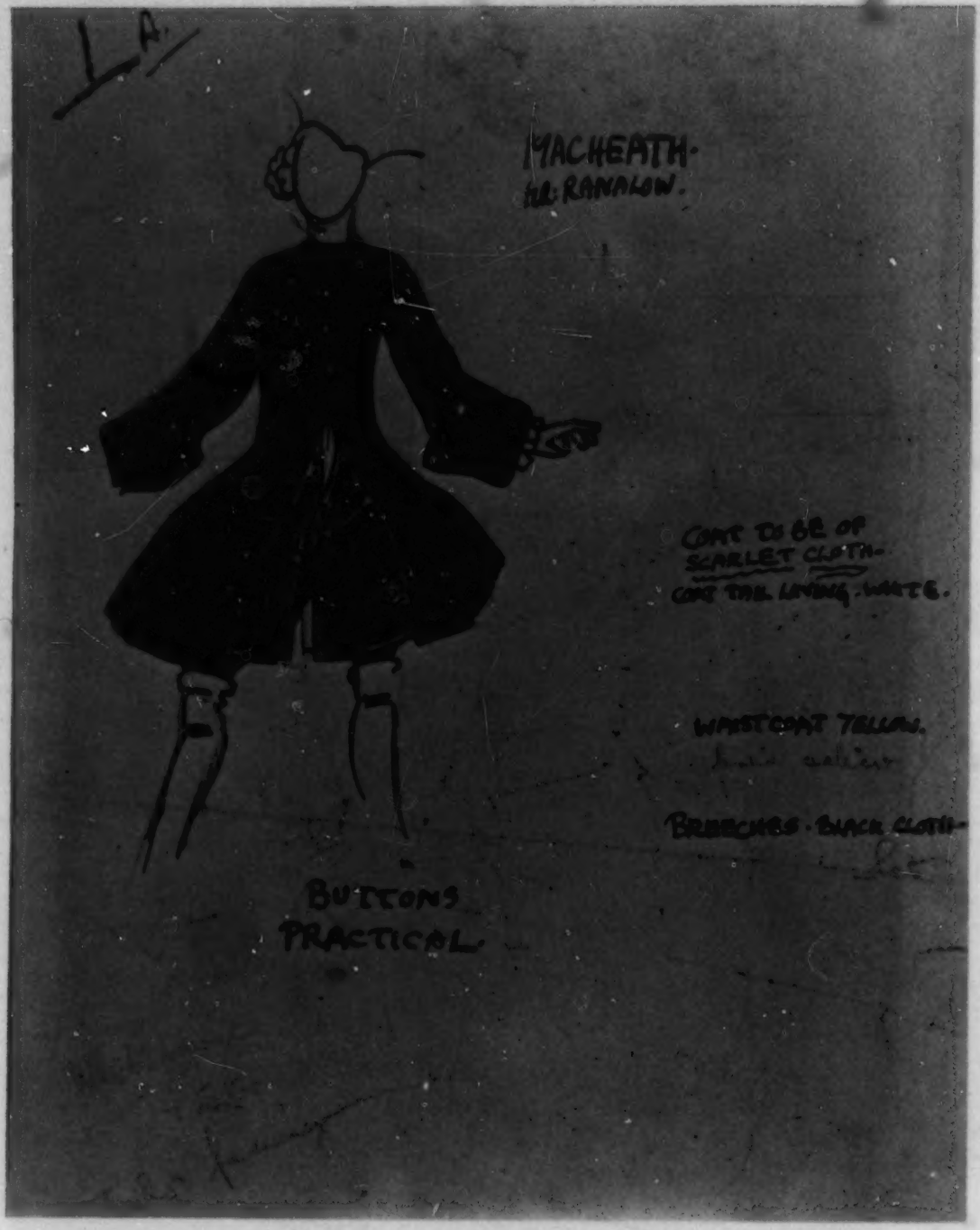
Unless otherwise stated, the exhibits illustrated were lent by Mrs Grace Lovat Fraser

THE
BEGGAR'S
OPERA
By Mr Gay.
C. LOVAT FRASER. 1920.
LYRIC THEATRE
HAMMERSMITH.

FLORINDO.

AS YOU LIKE IT
TOUCHSTONE

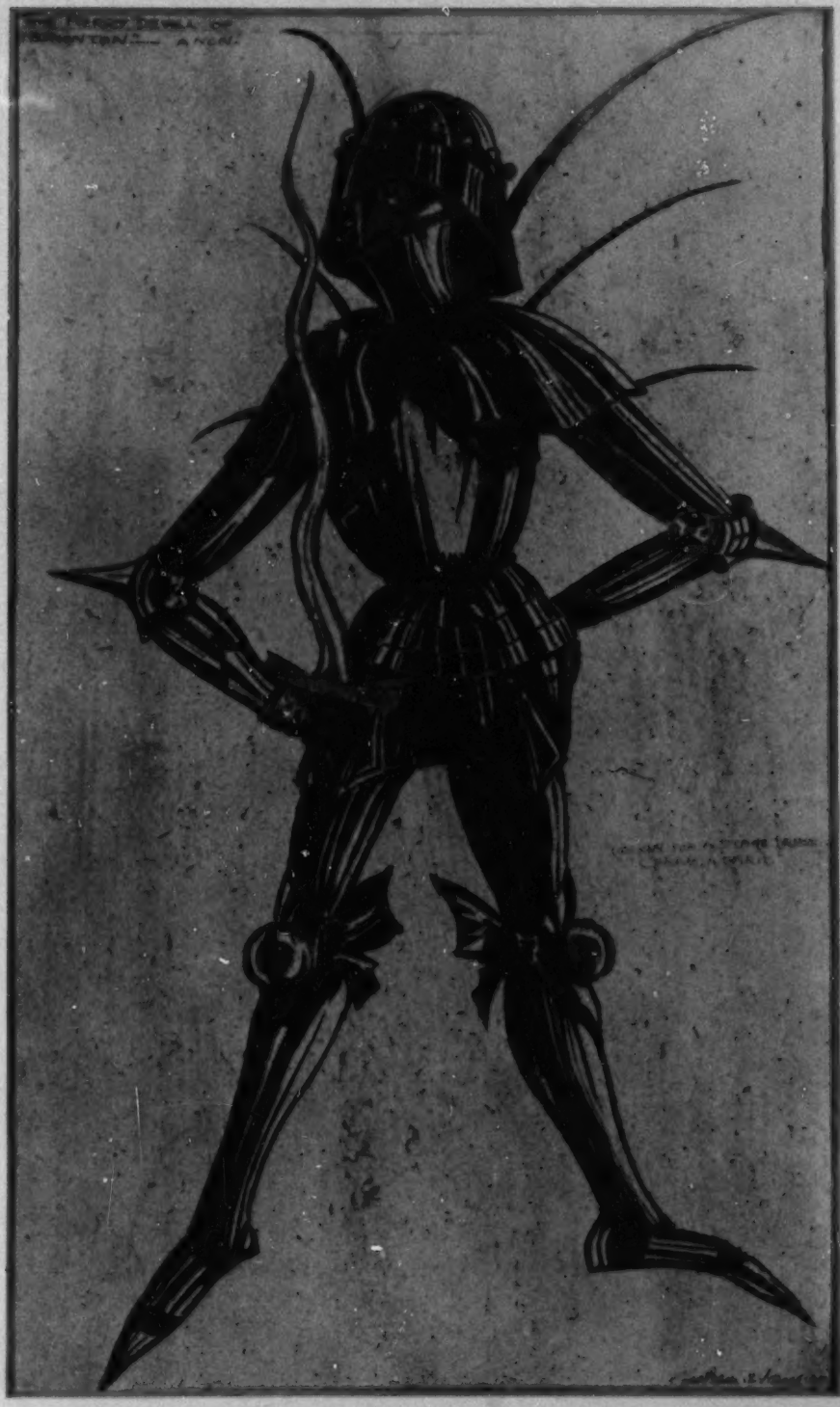
THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

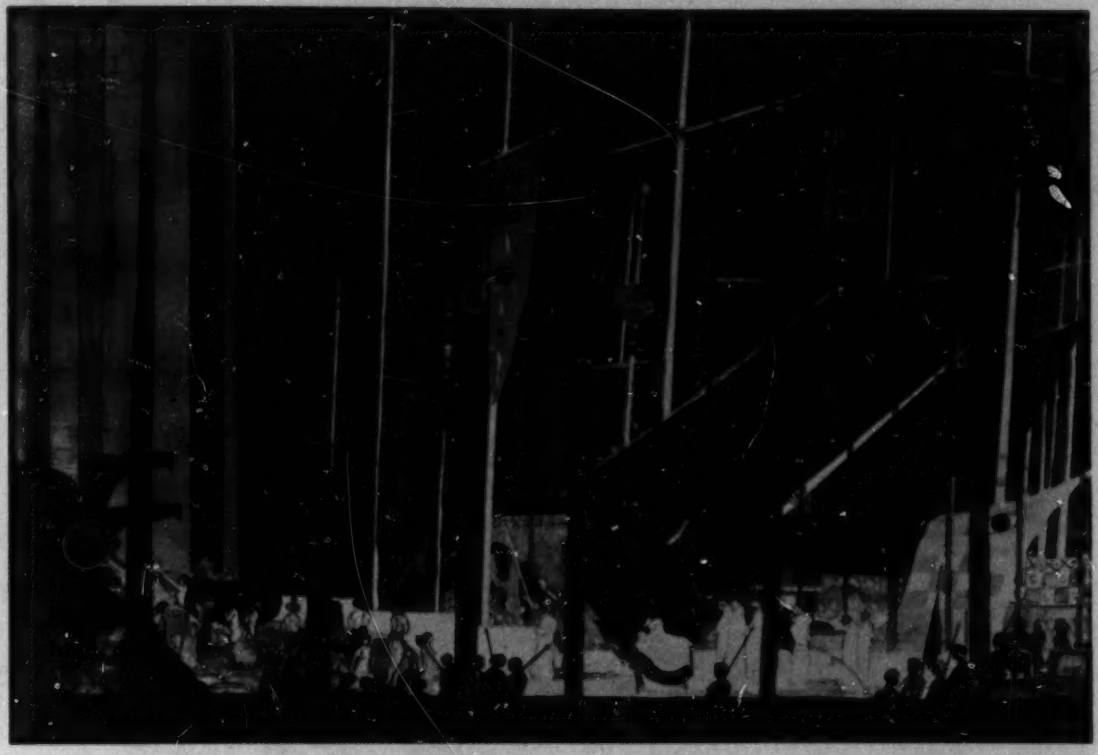

1 A.
MACHEATH.
MR. RANALOW.
COAT TO BE OF SCARLET CLOTH-
COAT TAIL LINING WHITE.
WAISTCOAT YELLOW.
BREECHES. BLACK CLOTH-
BUTTONS PRACTICAL

NURSERY RHYMES
COLISEUM

RHYMES.

MARY STUART
Bothwell





THE BULL.

By

Ralph Hodgson.

—

Price Sixpence.

PRICE—Twopence, plain.
Fourpence, coloured.

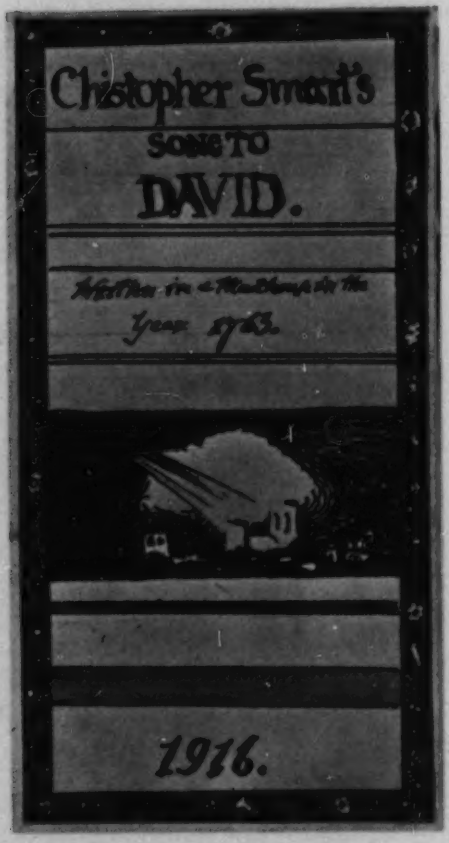
THE LATE, LAST ROOK

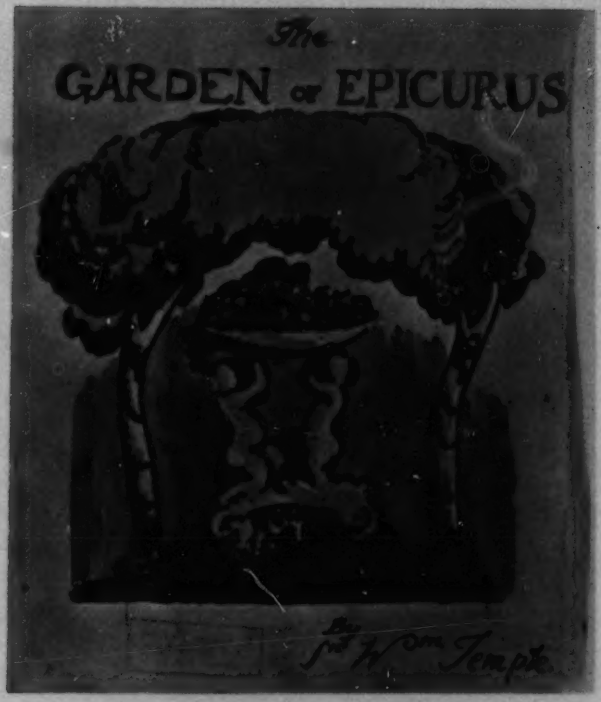
The old gilt vane and spire receive
The last beam eastward striking;
The first shy bat to peep at eve
Has found her to his liking. . . . .
The western heaven is dull and grey,
The last red glow has followed day.

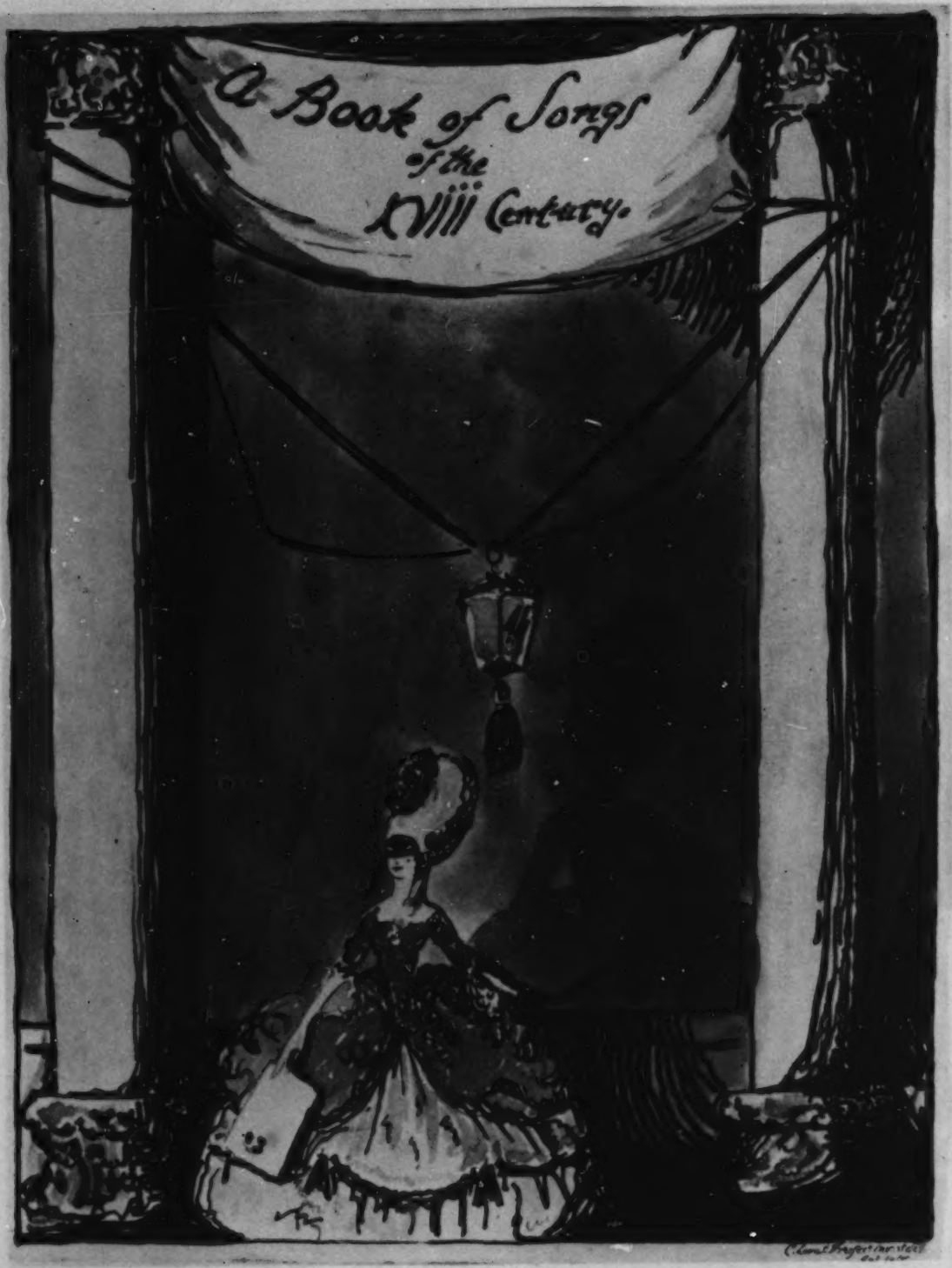
The late, last rook is housed and will
With cronies lie till morrow;
If there's a rook loquacious still
In dream he hunts a furrow,
And flaps behind a spectre team,
Or ghostly scarecrows walk his dream.

RALPH HODGSON.

PRINTED BY A. T. STEVENS, OF 40 ST. MARTINS LANE, IN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, FOR *FLYING FAME*, 43 ROLAND GARDENS, LONDON, S.W., WHERE COPIES MAY BE HAD FROM THE *SECRETARY*.

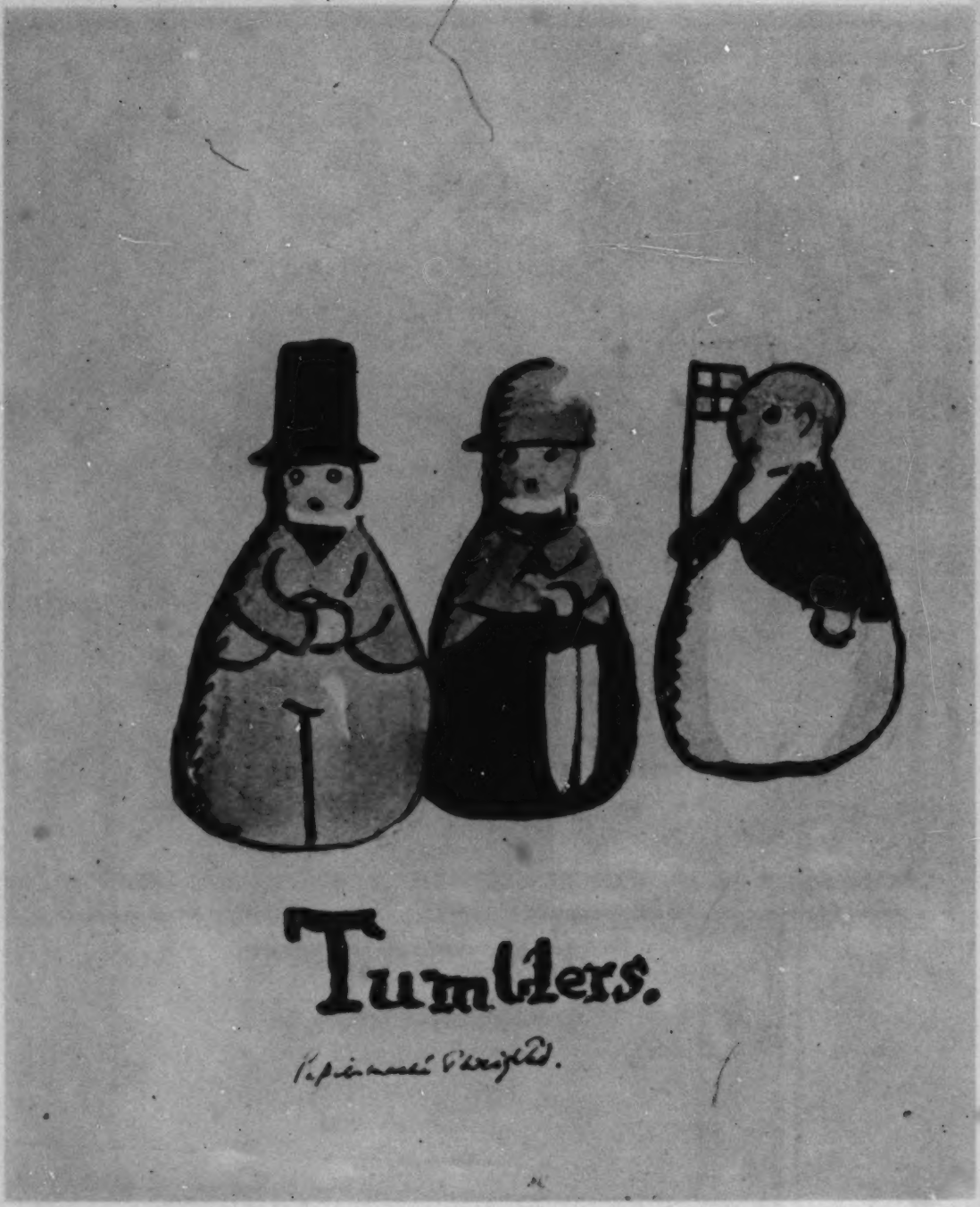

Christopher Smart's
SONG TO
DAVID.
Written in a Madhouse in the
Year 1763.
1916.


The
GARDEN of EPICURUS


A Book of Songs
of the
XVIII Century.

Poems
from the works of
CHARLES COTTON
Newly Decorated by
CLAUD LOVAT FRASER

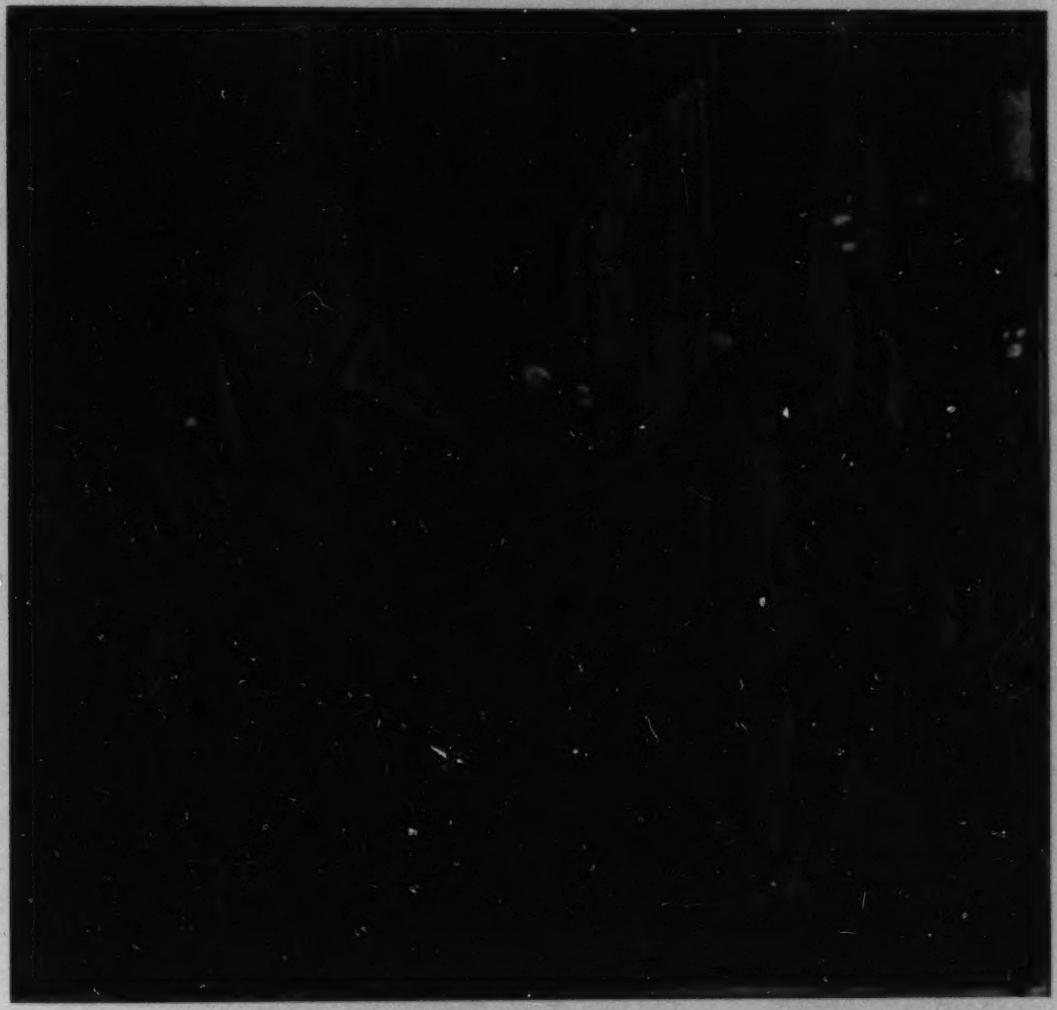
The Poetry Bookshop
35 *Devonshire Street*
Theobalds Road
*London, W.C.*1



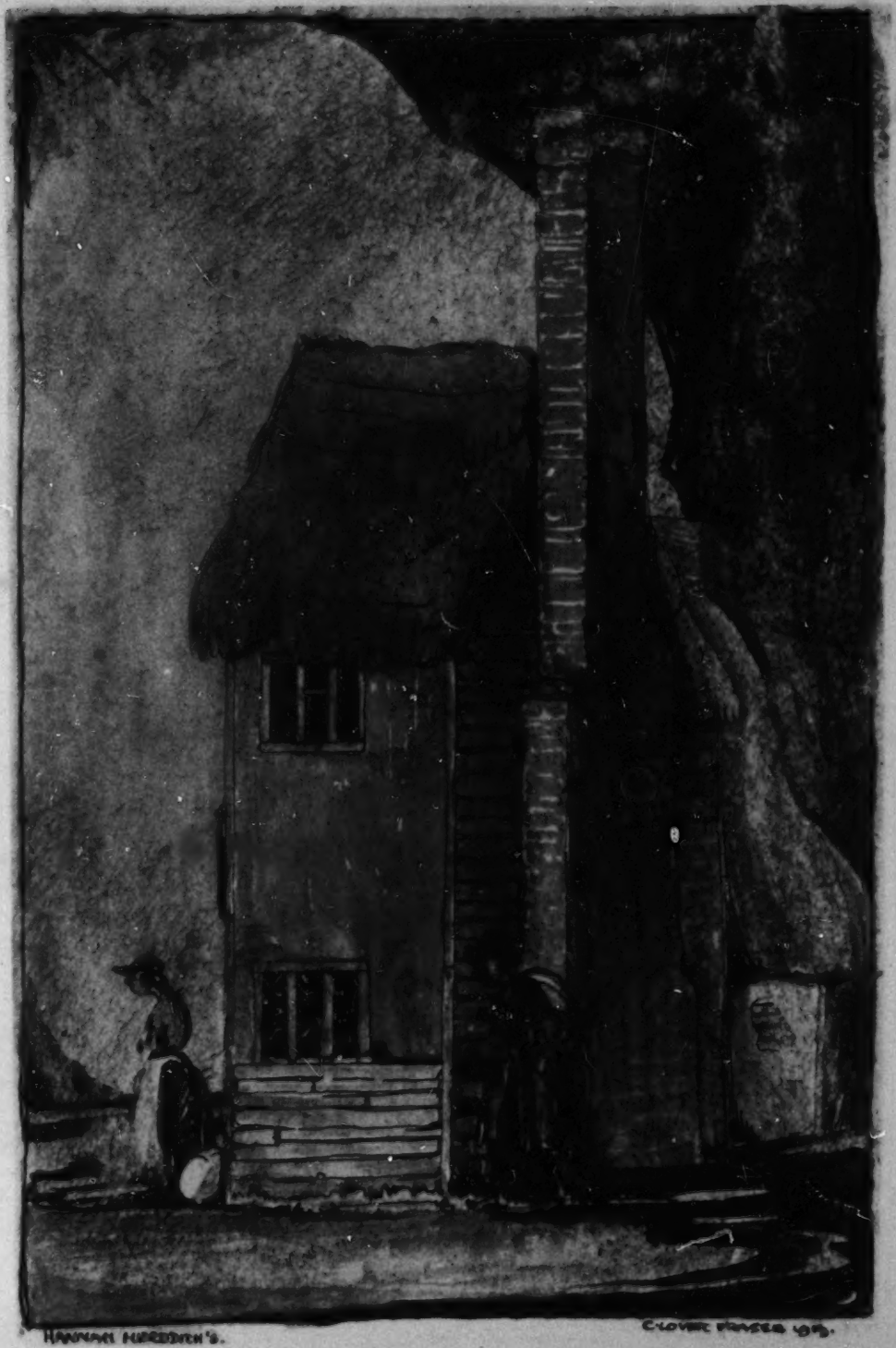
Tumblers.

Reproduced by Bierstadt.

HOTEL



Otogyps
Calvus.


HANNAH MEREDITH'S.
CLOVER FARGER 1915.